



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240

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Memorandum

To: Service Directorate
From: **Acting** *Elizabeth H. Stevens*
Director
Subject: Equal Program Access to Persons with Limited English Proficiency

Presidential Executive Order 13166 requires all Federal agencies, including the Service, to provide equal access to Federal programs and services for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). This Executive Order cross-references Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, regarding equal program access on the basis of race, color and national origin. The LEP program includes oral and written translations for languages where there are a high number of LEP clients speaking that language in the servicing area; and where there is a significant frequency of contact between the LEP beneficiaries and the service providers. The U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, has published extensive guidance on LEP, which can be found on the Internet at www.lep.gov.

The Service has already taken positive steps to implement the LEP requirements Service-wide, including: translation of key documents into Spanish and other key LEP languages; Spanish and Mandarin translation capabilities for Tier 2 of the Service's customer service hotline (1-800-344-WILD); the hiring of staff fluent in Spanish; and ongoing discussions with the Department regarding translation of portions of the Service's Web site in Spanish. Additionally, we have made a commitment to provide on-call translation services for LEP clients who come in contact with Service staff. We are implementing a Blanket Purchase Agreement with Tele-Interpreters, a California-based vendor, which is capable of providing 24 hour on-call translation services, within two minutes of the request, in 150 languages. There are no start-up costs for this translation service; the Service is only billed when the actual telephonic translation services are being provided. Translation services will be charged to the Public Access Civil Rights account; however, that account will be reimbursed pursuant to a "user pay" system. Based on previous experience, we do not anticipate a high volume of contacts between LEP clients and staff providing programs to the public.

Attached is an instruction sheet for using the on-call translation services. The easy to follow, step-by-step instructions are accompanied by a Language Identification Flashcard, and a Log of LEP contact activity. I ask each Assistant Director and Regional Director to distribute the attached instruction sheet, the Language Identification Flashcard and the Log, within two weeks, to all Service staff who provide services to the public.

Mr. Doug Gentile, the Service's Civil Rights Coordinator for public access, has overall responsibility for the LEP program, and is working with various Service staff and officials to implement the LEP program Service-wide. Any questions concerning the LEP program and on-call translation service should be directed to him on (703) 358-2558.

Thank you very much for your attention to this important matter.

Attachment 1

Attachment 2